



DCH Team,

What an exciting time to become a member of the DCH family! I am humbled and honored to have been appointed to lead this agency that does such critical work for so many Georgians. The support I have received during this transition has been tremendous, and I'd like to thank the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) – as well as many of you – for all the hard work as we move ahead.

As I said in my all staff town hall [virtual message](#), I want to thank Frank Berry for his friendship, leadership and commitment to the state of Georgia. While he left big shoes to fill, I look forward to treading my own path on this new journey to further our mission of providing Georgians with access to quality, affordable health care.



Like so many of you, I am passionate about public service and have dedicated the past 17 years to building a career in state government. A good deal of my background relates to finance – which is extremely critical to the work of this agency – and I am invigorated daily by the breadth of services DCH covers for Georgians. We have a lot of important work to do, and I am excited to meet the challenges that lie ahead. I am also grateful to have Ryan Loke stepping in as Deputy Commissioner and Chief Health Policy Officer. He has a strong background in health care and has worked closely with DCH in the past. Ryan is a great asset to the Department.

During this past month, I have spent a lot of time meeting and getting to know the members of the ELT, our division and office leads, and on-site team members in Human Resources, General Counsel, IT, and Facilities and Support Services. I know that in order to lead this agency effectively, two-way communication is paramount. I want to hear your ideas and I will share mine. To that end, we will be re-instituting our “Coffee with Commissioner” sessions in the coming months. Please stay tuned for more details on when those sessions will take place.

Another tenet you are familiar with already is accountability. I ask questions to dive deeply into issues so that I can make the best decisions for this agency. When I ask how, why and who is responsible, it is my effort to identify what we do, come up with ideas to determine if we're doing it most efficiently and effectively, what can be enhanced or improved, and who needs to be at the table for these discussions and for execution. I look forward to you joining me in moving us further along in being responsive and accountable to those we serve.

Before I close, I know that there are many questions regarding our plan for safely returning to the 2 Peachtree office. For now, no immediate changes are in place as we continue to determine the appropriate environmental plan that works for our people. The office is open for those of you who have to come in periodically for on-site services. Also, as an additional measure of safety, the Georgia Capitol Police maintains a physical presence on Lower Wall off Kimball Way from 6am-10am and 2pm-6pm if this resource is needed.

I am truly looking forward to leading this agency. And I am equally looking forward to meeting you in person when the time comes. In the meantime, if you have any questions for me, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you for all you do for the communities we serve.

Caylee



DCH Spotlight – The Technical Solutions Team

Remember “back in the day” when handling important business meant using antiquated methods such as fax machines, landlines and snail mail? In today’s technologically savvy and fast-paced society, such techniques just won’t fly. Here at DCH, we oversee many healthcare initiatives that require expedient results to meet the needs of our stakeholders, providers and constituents. Thanks to the work of the Technical Solutions Team, this agency is well equipped to meet the ever-changing needs of those who depend most on our services.

Easy. Fast. Efficient. Simple. Those are the keywords that quickly come to mind once the Technical Solutions Team begins working with a partner to design a solution that automates manual business processes. As the Technical Solutions Manager and the lead for the team, Mary Boltwood, a 14-year veteran of the agency, understands the importance of the work that her team performs for each office and division within the agency who requests their services.

“Anytime we approach a project, our primary focus is ensuring that we are providing solutions that excellently fit the need,” says Boltwood. “Our goal is to ensure that when the project is completed, the interfacing experience is easy to understand and effective. Our team works hard to provide exceptional customer service, and I think that shows in our work products.”

When it comes to creating online portals that eloquently streamline manual processes into an easily manageable digital workflow, Laserfiche is the software widely used throughout the agency for that purpose. The State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) is actually one of the earliest adopters of the process, engaging the team many years ago to develop a resource for constituents to easily submit appeal forms and requests for disabled dependent reviews. That project continues to be a great success, and has led to the creation of many other automated processes for other DCH offices and divisions such as:

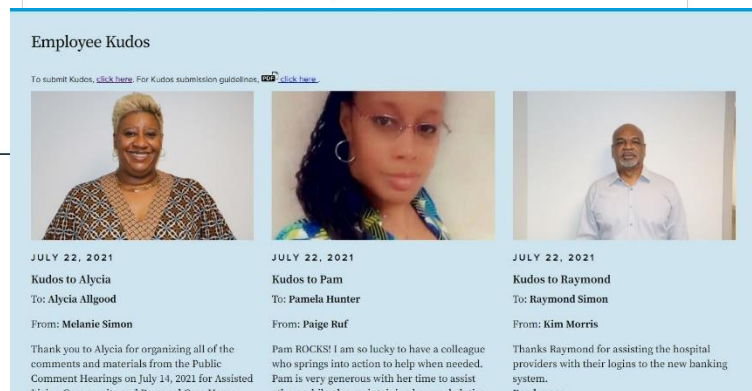
HFRD

The robust [Find-A-Facility portal](#) enhances transparency into the facilities for which DCH provides licensure and regulatory oversight. This site can be used by families looking for facilities for their loved ones, or by anyone looking for inspection reports to determine if a certain facility best fits their family's needs. The public facing, searchable repository automatically updates inspection reports every night, and Mary considers this one of the most impactful projects she and her team has developed in the past five years.



SHBP

For members seeking immediate help with their appeal, submitting information online means expedited processing for that request.



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

With the launch of the new DCH Internal Communications Dashboard, team members can now shout out their colleagues and team members by submitting their KUDOS [online](#)!

And speaking of team, Mary's team is made up of six individuals (including herself), who have the analytical, technological and creative skillsets necessary to accommodate some pretty challenging asks:

- Vonnetta Sloan, Technical Solutions Business Analyst
- Raghu Dahagam, SharePoint Administrator
- Ravi Katragadda, Programmer
- Ravi Nalajala, Programmer
- Ronald Hatchett, Database Administrator

Of course, creating these automated solutions requires a lot more than inputting codes; it also means listening to the ask with a critical ear and then working with the partner to establish precise business rules that enable the system to triage information automatically and correctly to the proper contact(s). Interestingly enough, Mary mentioned another aspect of the process that she personally uses to help lead her team to greater success:

"I actually have an undergraduate degree in anthropology," continues Boltwood.

"Because I've always been interested in human systems and human culture and human interaction, I love doing these projects because it helps to think about how people are actually going to interact with the technology that we create, what issues they may possibly experience and in what ways can we make the final product better. Really thinking through the human interaction portion, and then merging that thinking with the analytics and technological elements helps in streamlining the process and making things easier."

Over the past year, the team's workload greatly increased as the need for more automated processes became a key component in ensuring the remote working environment allowed the work of the agency to continue moving forward without missing a beat in the midst of a global health crisis. For the Technical Solutions Team, jumping right in and transforming and automating the most urgent business processes in record time has been a most gratifying experience:

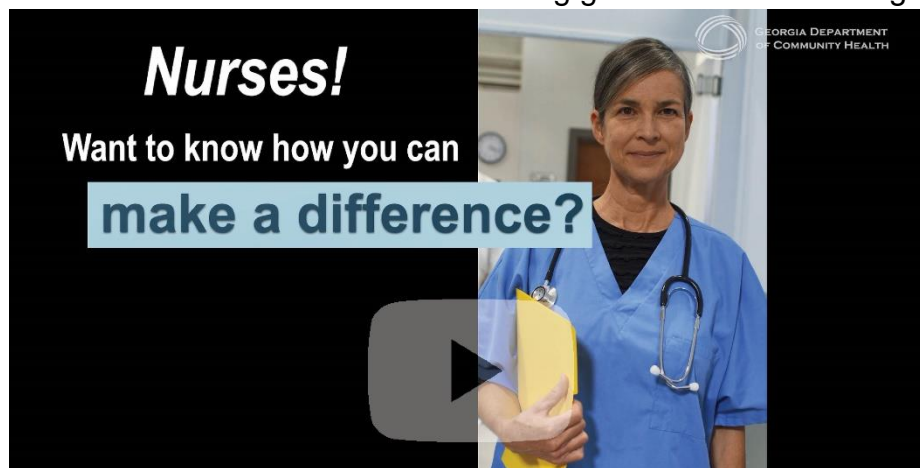
"Since we haven't been in the office, we can't depend on things like people being at the front desk to receive couriers delivering hard copies of important documents," continues Boltwood. "Being a part of the process that allows our team members to continue to be efficient while maintaining the continuity of the work that affects so many Georgians is quite rewarding. We've had the opportunity to touch so many mission critical business processes as a team, and I know that our greatest advantage has been our agility and adeptness at seamlessly building out complex technical solutions in record time. I'm grateful to be a part of a really great team who love what we do, and it's a pleasure to work with them all."



DCH IS RECRUITING NURSES!

Hey nurses!!! DCH is looking for you!

Throughout the summer, the Healthcare Facility Regulation Division (HFRD) has been seeking nurses for long-term care facility surveyor positions. These surveyors are responsible for going into facilities – usually unannounced -- and ensuring compliance with federal and state requirements, as well as working to ensure the safety and health of the residents. In the process, the surveyors get to travel around the state, meet the employees and residents of facilities and becoming greater allies for Georgia's most



vulnerable population. This position provides an opportunity for greater work-life balance without the sacrifice of the empathy, compassion and critical thinking skills they've honed within the profession.

But don't take our word for it! We sat down with a few HFRD leaders who are former surveyors, and asked them about their experiences. These interviews provide valuable testimony for the ongoing hiring campaign. Check it out [here](#)!

If you know of any registered professional nurses, or anyone with a bachelor's degree and 5 years' experience as a registered nurse, share this [video](#) with them. Give them the opportunity to make a difference in Georgia!

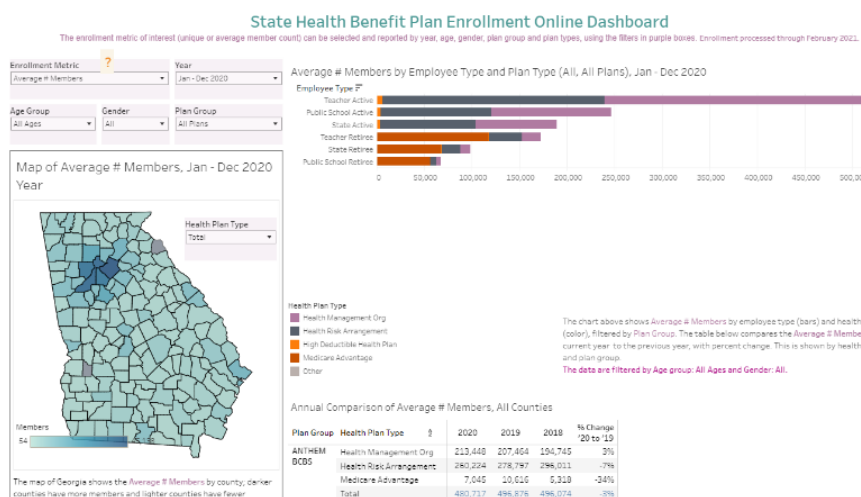


Office of Analytics and Program Improvement Launches New Data-Driven Dashboards

As the lead state agency responsible for ensuring Georgians have access to affordable, quality health care, DCH maintains massive amounts of information and data. And, while certain patient information is kept confidential, insight within certain data may be used to support strategic decisions, and ensure that the services provided by the agency are effectively reaching its targets and adequately servicing their needs.

Accessing these data sources is one of the primary reasons why the Office of Analytics and Program Improvement (OAPI) is such an important resource for the agency. Not only is the office responsible for crunching the numbers and evaluating the data, the team also consists of data-driven brainiacs who know how to break down that information down into easily digestible bites, and help us all make sense of the charts, graphs and numbers. With the OAPI, there really is no “crazy question”; if there is a DCH-related analytics question that may sound extraordinary, it is quite possible that someone on this team knows how to find the answer.

OAPI stays ready when it comes to analyzing data, and as one could imagine, they are often inundated with numerous requests for said data, both internally and externally. To help streamline some of those requests, the office maintains two critical data dashboards that are accessible to the public via [their OAPI Analytics page on the DCH website](#). The interactive dashboards allow interested parties to access 2019 and 2020 state-wide and county enrollment metrics for both the State Health Benefit Plan and Medicaid. The tableaus also allow the user to customize the data



This SHBP dashboard provides enrollment data for members in 2020.

according to their specific need, including tailoring the ask by age, gender and plan group.

And just recently, the team launched PDF dashboards (non-interactive) that display the weekly COVID-19 vaccination data for Medicaid and SHBP

members – statistics that have been heavily requested since the beginning of the pandemic.

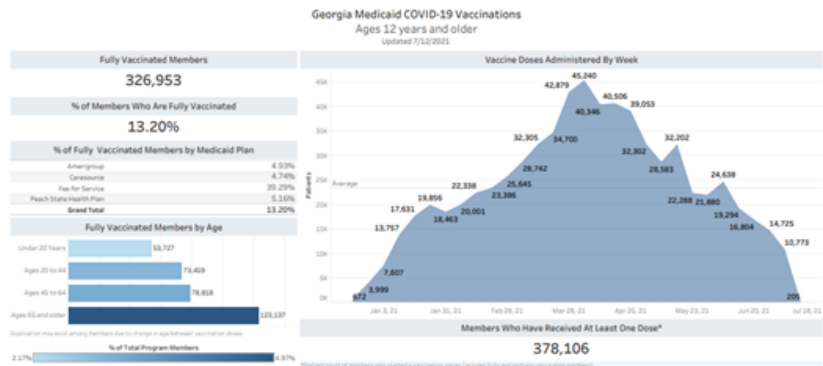
“As a new office, with a charge to promote a data-driven organization,

one of OAPI’s top priorities is to increase visibility of our data, both internally and externally,” says Daphanie Keit, executive director,

OAPI. “Over the last year, we’ve increased our data visualizations aptitude and are excited to make the dashboards available to our internal DCH customers, as well as having the ability to publish for public consumption. We’ve received support from leadership to move forward with publishing COVID vaccination dashboards, in addition to our Medicaid and SHBP enrollment dashboards...and we are looking to add at least three more by January.”

We’d like to extend a hearty KUDOS and SHOUT OUT to the team members who not only gather the data and organize it, but also use their analyses to provide insight that further promotes the adoption of data-driven business practices. In addition to Daphanie, the team consists of:

- Monica Cormier
- Namia Garrett-Scott
- Michealla James
- Sam Maruthappan
- Rama Rallapalli
- Robert Schmidt
- Steven Simmons
- Leslie Vaughns
- Yan Xiao



Medicaid dashboard showing the number of members who have received COVID-19 vaccinations through 7.12.21.

The dashboards are easily accessible via the [OAPI microsite](#), and can be used by team members to further gauge Georgia health trends, facts and figures that can be used to make more informed decisions that may help advance ongoing agency initiatives.



EMPLOYEE KUDOS – KEEP’EM COMING ON OUR NEW INTERNAL DASHBOARD!

Employee Kudos

To submit Kudos, [click here](#). For Kudos submission guidelines, [PDF click here](#).



JULY 22, 2021

Kudos to Alycia

To: Alycia Allgood

From: Melanie Simon

Thank you to Alycia for organizing all of the comments and materials from the Public Comment Hearings on July 14, 2021 for Assisted Living Community and Personal Care Home rule changes. Having everything consolidated



JULY 22, 2021

Kudos to Pam

To: Pamela Hunter

From: Paige Ruf

Pam ROCKS! I am so lucky to have a colleague who springs into action to help when needed. Pam is very generous with her time to assist others while also maintaining her work duties. On several occasions, Pam has helped me to



JULY 22, 2021

Kudos to Raymond

To: Raymond Simon

From: Kim Morris

Thanks Raymond for assisting the hospital providers with their logins to the new banking system.

[Read more](#)

DCH Team -- Thank you so much to those of you who have submitted KUDOS in honor of your team members and colleagues. We love to hear about the numerous accomplishments taking place across the agency within our offices and divisions. Keep’em coming, team! Let’s continue to celebrate each other’s accomplishments by visiting the [online webform](#) located on the [internal communications dashboard](#) and submitting your KUDOS today!



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH

DCHNOW

a quick look around

Plan an Outdoor Adventure with a

GEORGIA STATE PARK PASS





COVID-19

Get the latest updates about vaccines, testing, how to protect yourself and get care: **COVID-19 and vaccines.**

Looking for care options? Start with an **e-Visit** to share your symptoms and get guidance for care. Or, to talk to an advice nurse 24/7, call 1-855-512-5997.

Planning a trip? We've got you covered

As a Kaiser Permanente member, you're covered for emergency and urgent care anywhere in the world. Whether you're traveling in the United States or a foreign country, before you travel, visit **kp.org/travel**. It's important to remember that how you get care can vary depending on where you are. So, plan ahead and find out what emergency and other medical services are available where you'll be traveling. Safe travels!



We're halfway through the 2021 Wellness Program!

How many activities have you completed in your Kaiser Permanente 2021 Wellness Program? Visit

kp.org/engage to view and track your status.

Get the details.

Our investment in you

EARN
UP TO **\$1,000**
per household



10 minutes to a healthier you

Have you taken the Total Health Assessment yet? It takes about 10 minutes to complete and can provide you with a customized health plan to help you feel your best. And completing the THA brings you one step closer to earning your 2021 Wellness Reward. **Take the THA today!**

Join our live virtual classes

As a member, you have access to healthy lifestyle classes, even from home! Experts in the field lead live virtual classes and provide hands-on training on how to make conscious, everyday choices to live well. Classes are available to non-members, too! **Explore upcoming classes.**



Committed to keeping you safe and healthy

Need to get tested for COVID-19?



Kaiser Permanente still offers COVID-19 testing at our four drive-through testing locations.

- You'll receive a PCR test – the most accurate kind.
- Most test results are available within 24 hours.
- You and your doctor can both see your results right in your **kp.org** account.

Just start by completing a simple **e-Visit** on **kp.org**.

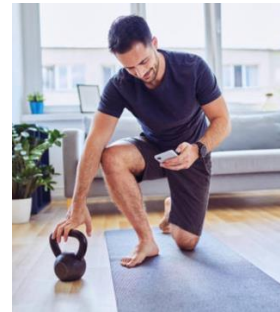
- If you have symptoms and the e-Visit indicates testing is needed, you can then go to the nearest drive-through testing location without an appointment.
- If you do not have symptoms, you'll be guided to schedule an appointment online for the drive-through.

If the testing is for a child, or if you prefer to call, you can call 404-365-0966, Monday – Friday, 7 am – 7 pm ET to request an appointment for testing.

Fitness Deals from Kaiser Permanente

Stay active and fit with a variety of reduced rates on studios, gyms, fitness gear, and online classes — available for Kaiser Permanente members. Check out fitness deals from ClassPass, Active&Fit Direct and Choose Healthy.

Learn more.



Good Food Good Mood Recipe Videos



Eating healthy not only improves your physical appearance, but your attitude and mood as well. Check out these 5 easy and delicious “Good Mood Good Food” video recipes from Kaiser Permanente and **Atlanta Eats!** **View the videos.**

Zucchini Noodle Salad

Healthy Substitutions

Serve up vitamin-rich “zoodles” instead of carb-heavy pasta

The benefits

Traditional refined pasta is high in calories and carbohydrates, which can lead to blood sugar spikes.²
Instead:

- Spiral-cut zucchini, or “zoodles,” are loaded with nutrients, including vitamin C for processing cholesterol and manganese for producing collagen.³
- Poppy seeds bring delicious texture to this recipe, as well as fiber, which improves digestion and helps you feel full.⁴
- Olive oil is high in anti-inflammatory fatty acids and antioxidants that help protect cells.⁵
- Honey also contains antioxidants that may be useful in treating many health conditions.⁶
- Raw or cooked garlic can help boost immunity, reduce inflammation, and possibly even regulate blood pressure.⁷



Anthem   **SHBP**
State Health Benefit Plan
A Division of the Georgia Department of Community Health

INGREDIENTS

2 large zucchini, cut in spirals
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons poppy seeds
1 small garlic clove, crushed
Salt and pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Combine the above ingredients and serve immediately¹.

Time-saving tip: look for pre-cut zucchini noodles at the grocery store.

¹ BBC Good Food: *Courgette salad* (accessed October 2020): bbcgoodfood.com.

² Healthline: *Is Pasta Healthy or Unhealthy?* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com.

³ Livestrong: *The Health Benefits of Zucchini* (accessed October 2020): livestrong.com.

⁴ Livestrong: *The Health Benefits of Poppy Seeds* (accessed October 2020): livestrong.com.

⁵ Healthline: *Why Extra Virgin Olive Oil is the Healthiest Fat on Earth* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com.

⁶ Saeed Samarghandian, Tahereh Farkhondeh, and Fariborz Samini: *Honey and Health: A Review of Recent Clinical Research*. Pharmacognosy Research (April-June 2017): pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28539734.

⁷ Cleveland Clinic: *6 Surprising Ways Garlic Boosts Your Health* (accessed October 2020): health.clevelandclinic.org.



There are other options besides a gym to sweat it out this summer. Check out how [you can work it out without spending money on the gym.](#) Don't forget to register for the [Be Well SHBP well-being program](#) and participate in our monthly challenge.